

of last year. Just 3 days after Christmas, 1.3 million Americans, including over 1,000 Granite Staters, were cut off from their benefits. Each week of congressional inaction, as many as 150 additional Granite Staters will lose access to benefits.

This compensation provides a critical lifeline to Granite Staters and other Americans who are struggling to find work.

This includes my constituent Lois Little, a teacher who wrote to me from Colebrook, New Hampshire. At the end of the last school year, Lois lost her job after teaching for 29 years because of falling enrollment in her rural school district. Over the last few months, she has applied to over 100 jobs, without any luck.

Her savings have been exhausted, unemployment benefits are now her only source of income, and she is worried about whether she can keep her home.

Let's come together and give Lois a chance. Let's renew Emergency Unemployment Compensation today.

THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WAR ON POVERTY

(Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize the success and legacy of the war on poverty. The war on poverty, proposed 50 years ago today in this Chamber by then-President and fellow Texan, Lyndon Johnson, paved the way towards the enactment of many of our Nation's most popular and significant Federal programs, including Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, Head Start.

These programs, along with Social Security, unemployment insurance, and now the Affordable Care Act, form America's social safety net, which has protected millions of our Nation's children, working adults and elderly from falling into poverty.

Less than 2 weeks ago, through the inaction of this House, 1.3 million Americans, including 65,000 Texans, saw their unemployment insurance disappear. This number will grow to over 3 million in the coming months if action is not taken. This vital lifeline is essential for millions of our fellow Americans who are out of work and struggling to make ends meet.

The 50th anniversary of President Johnson's speech is the perfect opportunity for Congress to show its support for those less fortunate, and I call on this Chamber to bring the legislation to renew Emergency Unemployment today.

□ 1615

PASS UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE NOW

(Mr. ELLISON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. ELLISON. Mr. Speaker, when Lyndon Baines Johnson came before this House and this Nation to say that the United States, the richest country in the history of the world, should not have people living in squalor and in poverty, shouldn't have seniors eating dog food, shouldn't have poor kids living with no chance of a better life, he did what this Nation really is all about. He really lived up to the true meaning of "liberty and justice for all," and he made those words real when, for so many years, they had not been real.

And yet those programs which lifted millions of Americans out of poverty, that war on poverty which lifted so many out and gave so many people a chance, after about 10 years, there became a war on the war on poverty.

Now the latest battle in the war on the war on poverty, what took place on December 28, 2013, this House refused to extend unemployment insurance for 1.3 million Americans. This is no way to uphold the great legacy of the war on poverty. Let's pass unemployment insurance. Let's do it now.

CONGRESSIONAL BLACK CAUCUS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the minority leader.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today with many Members to mark President Lyndon Baines Johnson's 1964 State of the Union Address.

Let me first take a moment to thank Leader PELOSI; our whip, STENY HOYER; and the chair of the Congressional Black Caucus, Congresswoman MARCIA FUDGE, for their tremendous leadership in leading our agenda for economic justice and for jobs.

This is truly a historic day in our fight to provide every American with a pathway out of poverty. This morning, we were joined here at the Capitol by Linda Johnson Robb, President Lyndon Baines Johnson and Lady Bird Johnson's eldest daughter, to mark the 50th anniversary of her father's State of the Union speech in which he declared an unconditional war on poverty. At the time of his speech, the Nation's supplemental poverty rate was approximately 26 percent; 36 percent of low-income households struggled with food insecurity; and more than a third of American seniors were living in poverty.

And let me tell you, President Johnson got it. He recognized in his speech that poverty is a national problem requiring national organization and support. He knew that in a great society it is absolutely essential that we prioritize investments that lift millions out of poverty. As a result of his vision, his daughter reminded us this morning of the bipartisan and bicameral effort that followed, benchmark antipoverty legislation passed during the Johnson administration, in-

cluding—and I want to remind everyone of these major initiatives that have significantly changed the lives of millions of Americans—the Civil Rights Act, the Urban Mass Transportation Act, the Criminal Justice Act, the Food Stamp Act, the Older Americans Act, Social Security amendments, the Voting Rights Act, the Housing and Urban Development Act, the Public Works and Economic Development Act, the Department of Housing and Urban Development Act, the Amendment to the Immigration and Nationality Act, the Higher Education Act, the Child Nutrition Act, the Child Protection Act, and the National School Lunch Act, in addition to Head Start, Job Corps, of course food stamps, now known as SNAP, Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security.

The result of these policies and programs are undeniable. The poverty rate was cut nearly in half by the mid-1970s. They even had a personal impact on many of us here, a personal impact on me, providing a critical bridge over troubled waters when I was a single mother in the seventies, trying to raise two boys and go to college. And I am forever grateful to the American people for being there for me when I needed them.

And we know that today, 50 years later, these critical antipoverty programs continue to provide that support for vulnerable Americans and people living on the edge. Today, the Nation's supplemental poverty rate is now 16 percent, well below what it was in 1964. The programs put in place after the war on poverty, they work. They create economic security, return people to their dignity, and provide opportunities for Americans to lift themselves out of poverty.

According to a report released by the Center for American Progress yesterday, without the safety net initiated as a part of the war on poverty, "poverty rates today would be nearly double what they currently are." And I will now insert that report into the RECORD.

[From americanprogress.org, Jan. 7, 2014]

KEY FINDINGS FROM OUR NEW NATIONAL POLL

One-quarter to one-third of Americans, and even higher percentages of Millennials and people of color, continue to experience direct economic hardship. Sixty-one percent of Americans say their family's income is falling behind the cost of living, compared to just 8 percent who feel they are getting ahead and 29 percent who feel they are staying even. Twenty-five percent to 34 percent of Americans report serious problems falling behind in rent, mortgage, or utilities payments or being unable to buy enough food, afford necessary medical care, or keep up with minimum credit card payments. While these numbers have somewhat retreated over the last five years, they are still shockingly high, and the disparities across demographic groups underscore how uneven the current recovery has been.

A majority of Americans have a direct personal connection to poverty. Fifty-four percent of Americans say that someone in their immediate or extended families is poor, a figure that has actually increased 2 points

since we conducted our first poll in. Nearly two in three African Americans (65 percent) report a direct connection to poverty, while 59 percent of Hispanics say the same.

Americans vastly overestimate the annual income necessary to be officially considered poor. Perhaps expressing a more realistic understanding of the economy than official government measures currently capture, Americans on average estimate that it takes just over \$30,000 in annual income for a family of four to be considered officially in poverty—about \$7,000 more than the government's poverty line. Most respondents in the focus groups were shocked to hear that the official poverty line was as low as it is; many suggested that it represents a disconnect with the reality of rising prices over the last few years. Americans on average also report that it would take more than \$55,000 in annual income to be considered out of poverty and safely in the middle class.

Americans now believe that nearly 40 percent of their fellow citizens are living in poverty. When we conducted our 2008 poll, 13.2 percent of Americans were living below the federal poverty line, but our survey found that Americans guessed the number to be 29 percent. Today, with unemployment at pre-financial crisis levels and a recovery ostensibly underway for several years, government statistics tell us that 15 percent of Americans live below the poverty level. The public, however, believes that number is now 39 percent—a stunning 10-point increase that flies in the face of economic indicators such as the unemployment rate, consumer confidence, the financial markets, and gross domestic product, or GDP.

Americans strongly believe that poverty is primarily the result of a failed economy rather than the result of personal decisions and lack of effort. In a forced choice test of ideas, nearly two in three Americans (64 percent) agree more with a structural argument about the causes of poverty—“Most people who live in poverty are poor because their jobs don't pay enough, they lack good health care and education, and things cost too much for them to save and get ahead,” underscoring the current economy's failings in the areas of wages, health care, education, and cost of living. In contrast, only 25 percent of Americans agree more with a personal cause—“Most people who live in poverty are poor because they make bad decisions or act irresponsibly in their own lives.” Even white conservatives and libertarians prefer the structural vision of a failed economy over personal reasons for poverty by a wide margin (63 percent to 29 percent).

Retrospective evaluations of the “war on poverty” are mixed, but Americans across ideological and partisan lines believe the government has a responsibility to use its resources to fight poverty. Americans do not generally have a favorable impression of the term “the war on poverty” without additional context about the programs and goals associated with the larger project. But after introducing information to describe the war on poverty and its impact, an overwhelming percentage of Americans—86 percent—agrees that the government has a responsibility to use some of its resources to combat poverty. Moreover, a majority (61 percent) feels that the war on poverty has made a difference, albeit not a major difference, in achieving its goals (41 percent say war on poverty has made a “minor difference”; 20 percent say it has made a “major difference”). Retrospective evaluations of the war on poverty, however, are heavily divided by ideology, partisanship, and race. Nearly 7 in 10 (69 percent) white liberals and progressives believe the war on poverty has worked, and more than 6 in 10 (64 percent) white conservatives and libertarians believe the opposite.

Despite mixed feelings about the original war on poverty, there is strong support for a more realistic goal of reducing poverty by half over the next 10 years. Asked whether they would support or oppose “the President and Congress setting a national goal to cut poverty in the United States in half within ten years,” 7 in 10 Americans said they would support such a goal—40 percent of the public would strongly support the goal—and only 22 percent would oppose it. This figure is quite similar to the 74 percent of support reported in the first study in 2008. Support for a national goal of cutting poverty in half is very strong among African Americans (87 percent support, 58 percent strongly) and reaches roughly 80 percent among both Millennials (79 percent) and Latinos (79 percent). Sixty-five percent of whites support this goal as do a majority of Democrats (89 percent), Independents (66 percent), and Republicans (54 percent).

The public is clear about its priorities for reducing poverty—jobs, wages, and education. Asked which two areas they believe are most important for new investments, 40 percent of Americans choose “creating jobs and increasing wages”; 30 percent choose “job training and workplace preparation”; 25 percent choose “elementary and secondary education”; 23 percent choose “college access and affordability”; and 21 percent choose “early childhood education.”

Americans also express very strong support for a number of policies to help reduce poverty rates with particular intensity around jobs, wages, and education but also on more traditional safety net items. Of the 11 policy ideas tested, five proposals received 80 percent or higher total support and 50 percent or higher strong support from Americans. These five policy proposals are: help low wage workers afford quality child care (86 percent total support, 52 percent strong support); expand nutrition assistance to provide families with healthy food and enough to eat (85 percent total support, 50 percent strong support); make universal pre-kindergarten available for all children (84 percent total support, 59 percent strong support); expand publicly funded scholarships to help more families afford college (84 percent total support, 54 percent strong support); and increase the minimum wage and make sure it rises with inflation (80 percent total support, 58 percent strong support). A second tier of anti-poverty proposals with roughly three-quarters total support and more than 40 percent strong support includes ideas for expanded tax credits like the Earned Income Tax Credit and Child Tax Credit and access to affordable health coverage, as well as proposals for a new national jobs program and more refinancing of mortgages.

Policymakers should feel confident that the American public will support efforts to expand economic opportunity, increase access to good jobs and wages, and maintain a robust social safety net. Harsh negative attitudes about the poor that seemingly defined political discussions throughout the 1980s and 1990s have given way to public recognition that many Americans—poor and middle class alike—are facing many pressures trying to stay afloat and get ahead in the difficult economic environment. Supporters of anti-poverty efforts should not be complacent in their efforts, however, and should recognize that although Americans back government action to reduce poverty, questions remain about the structure and scope of these efforts and how effective they have been over time.

Let me give you an example. SNAP lifted 5 million people out of poverty in 2012 alone; and according to a new report by the White House, released yes-

terday, unemployment benefits reduced poverty by nearly 1 percent in 2012 alone.

Without Social Security, nearly half of our Nation's seniors would live in poverty; and since 2008, unemployment insurance has kept 11 million people out of poverty, including 2.5 million children and adults in 2012.

We are going to talk about not only the history this evening but also about the challenges ahead.

I will now yield to Congresswoman YVETTE CLARKE from New York to speak about many of the challenges which remain, in addition to a historical perspective on the war on poverty.

Ms. CLARKE of New York. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, five decades after President Johnson declared a war on poverty, economic inequality is pervasive in our society; and our work to reduce substantial disparities in income and wealth must continue. But we must not forget that the war on poverty has and will continue to improve the lives of millions of Americans.

For who among us would tell a senior citizen that Medicare was a failure? Or tell the parents of a child who attends preschool under Head Start that that program doesn't work? Who among us would tell the families who have had access to desperately needed—and often lifesaving—health care as a result of Medicaid that that program was not worth the cost?

Mr. Speaker, our work has not yet been completed. In December, we returned home to share the holiday season with our families, to gather at the dinner table, and to exchange gifts. However, millions of Americans were not as fortunate because Congress returned home without extending unemployment benefits to 1.3 million Americans, not including the millions of people who rely on them and their families.

If unemployment benefits are not extended, approximately 5 million Americans are expected to lose emergency unemployment benefits over the next 12 months; and of that number, 383,000 are New Yorkers. Additionally, the lapse in unemployment benefits is likely to result in an increase in demand for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, known as SNAP.

This is occurring at a time when the Republicans are contemplating making \$40 billion in cuts to nutrition assistance. Already, 3,185,000 New Yorkers are dealing with the impacts of the SNAP benefit cut that happened this past November due to an expiration of funding made available under the American Recovery Act.

This is unfair. This is unjust. It makes no sense and, more importantly, it does not help Americans regain their economic footing. But we have the ability to correct this mistake by extending unemployment benefits and preventing further cuts to SNAP.

Congress can affirm the common priorities that we share as a Nation and

work together to make them a reality. We, as a Congress, must continue to work together to end poverty in America. Having said that, I yield back to the gentlelady in remembrance of President Johnson's 50-year war on poverty. We need to take up the battle once again.

Ms. LEE of California. I now yield to the gentleman from North Carolina, Congressman G.K. BUTTERFIELD.

Mr. BUTTERFIELD. I thank the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LEE) for yielding and also for her passion and her extraordinary work on the issue of poverty and related causes.

Mr. Speaker, 50 years ago, President Lyndon B. Johnson made a very bold pronouncement. He declared a national war on poverty. President Johnson helped pave the way for so many low-income families, and I am proud today to recognize his immeasurable contributions to the battle against poverty.

I understand that President Johnson's daughter is still on Capitol Hill. She visited with the Congressional Black Caucus today, and I just wanted to publicly thank her and thank the Johnson family for their contributions to America.

Just last year, we commemorated the 50th anniversaries of the March on Washington and Dr. Martin Luther King's historic speech, imploring all Americans to aspire towards a society of equality and acceptance. Dr. King's speech illustrated the racial realities faced by people of color since before even the Civil War.

In 1964, President Johnson delivered a historic State of the Union Address right in this Chamber that exposed the tough racial inequalities present in the 1960s. He gave voice to the poor by contrasting the stark economic differences between the wealthy and the poor, and inspired a series of transformative laws, including the Civil Rights Act and the Economic Opportunity Act. Those laws, Mr. Speaker, established the first Federal framework to combat the racial and economic and educational and even employment inequities that were pervasive in our society. The landmark legislation enacted during the Johnson administration built upon the principles of the Declaration of Independence, the Emancipation Proclamation, the New Deal, and the civil rights movement.

The work began by President Johnson more than a half a century ago continues today with no less urgency. While national poverty metrics have improved since the war on poverty began, income inequality is still a major problem today, and pockets of persistent poverty remain all across our country. In my congressional district, one in four people that I represent, including 36 percent of our children, live at or below the poverty level.

Income inequality in America is getting worse. I want to say that again for emphasis: income inequality in America is getting worse, not better. And

the gap between the haves and the have-nots continues to widen. The poverty rate now is the highest it has been since 1994; and in some parts of my district, median household incomes have dropped—have dropped since the year 2000.

This is a fitting week to recognize the anniversary of the war on poverty, as the Senate considers extending the emergency unemployment insurance for 3 months or more. More than 170,000 unemployed North Carolinians are considered long-term unemployed and have been searching for work for more than 26 weeks.

Last year, North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory dealt a devastating blow to the long-term unemployed by reducing State unemployment benefits, which caused the Federal Emergency Unemployment Compensation program to dissolve in our State. The Governor made this decision knowing its harmful impacts, making North Carolina the only State in the country to end emergency jobless benefits for its citizens. That decision forfeited \$780 million in urgently needed Federal benefits for long-term unemployed North Carolinians and cost our State \$1.5 billion in economic activity.

We must stand up against those like Governor McCrory who seek to disenfranchise the less fortunate by continuing President Johnson's work, by extending the emergency unemployment insurance and other critical programs that help families through difficult times. We cannot afford to turn a blind eye to those who are most in need. We are not that type of country.

Ms. LEE of California. I thank the gentleman from North Carolina.

Now I would like to yield to the Democratic whip, STENY HOYER, whose Democratic Whip's Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity I am honored and proud to chair. I thank him very much for being here and for his tremendous leadership.

Mr. HOYER. I thank the gentlelady for taking this time. I thank the gentlelady even more for taking the time and the focus and being indefatigable in making sure that the richest Nation on the face of the Earth focuses on the least of these in our country. I thank her for her leadership. I am proud that she is working on the Task Force on Poverty, Income Inequality, and Opportunity. And in chairing that effort for our caucus, she is doing an extraordinary job.

□ 1630

It is time, however, that all of us continue to do an extraordinary job. When President Johnson stood in this Chamber at that rostrum, Mr. Speaker, on January 8, 1964, he declared an "unconditional war on poverty in America." That has been said so many times today. He launched a legislative agenda that led to the creation of Medicare, Medicaid, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, and nutrition assistance for those at risk of going hungry, particularly our children.

Today, thanks to that war on poverty, infant mortality has substantially decreased, childhood malnutrition has fallen significantly, and college graduations have risen.

But that is not to declare victory. There is much yet to be done. The poverty rate for senior citizens in 1959 was 35 percent. Today, it is 9 percent thanks to the New Deal and Great Society programs. Food stamps continue to keep as many as 4 million Americans out of poverty, which is why it is so critical to provide robust SNAP funding in the farm bill, Mr. Speaker.

Fifty years, a half a century after President Johnson launched the war on poverty, as we take stock of the progress we have made, we must be candid in assessing the difficult challenges that remain before us. That is what Congresswoman LEE is bringing to our attention and to the attention of the country.

Following the Great Recession, and with long-term unemployment higher than it was a few years ago, millions of our fellow Americans are today teetering on the edge of poverty while others still have yet to escape its grasp. In 2012, according to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, nearly 50 million people in America were poor in the richest land on the face of the Earth, and more than one in five of those were children.

States and local governments, under pressure from reductions in Federal funding for domestic programs, are struggling to maintain the safety net that, for a generation, have placed a floor under those who have lost a job, fallen ill, or were born into dire circumstances.

As middle class families have strained under the difficult conditions of the recession and its consequences, the lowest-income Americans have been forced to endure a severe lack of opportunities to enter the middle class. We want to promote jobs. We want to make sure the middle class can succeed, support themselves and their families and have the kind of life that we dream of and promise as an American. We also want to make sure that those who are not middle class can get into the middle class.

In his State of the Union address in 1964, President Johnson said this:

Very often, a lack of jobs and money is not the cause of poverty but the symptom. The cause may lie deeper in our failure to give our fellow citizens a fair chance to develop their own capacities, in a lack of education and training, in a lack of medical care and housing, in a lack of decent communities in which to live and bring up their children.

Poverty is the result, not the cause. Central to our ability to sustain the American dream is our responsibility to one another to make upward mobility possible.

Right now, 1.4 million Americans—right now, Mr. Speaker—are worrying about meeting their basic needs since emergency unemployment insurance was cut off on December 28 of last year,

3 days after Christmas, the season of giving, the season of caring, and the season of thinking about those who are in need. Every week that goes by without turning this lifeline back on will see another 72,000 Americans lose their emergency income.

Congress has the ability to restore these benefits right now, and Democrats, proud of our history leading the war on poverty, will continue to push and demand for that extension. Democrats will keep fighting for a strong, secure, and growing middle class by working to raise the minimum wage—and I see my friend from Maryland (Mr. DELANEY) in the back of the Chamber; Congressman DELANEY has been leading an effort in our State to make sure that we raise the minimum wage—and making sure the Affordable Care Act expands access to quality health care as intended.

We must also create a pathway to citizenship and opportunity for undocumented workers who are living in the shadows in poverty as part of comprehensive immigration reform, and we must be vigorous in enforcing our laws that prevent discrimination in housing, hiring, and access to education.

Mr. Speaker, if we are to make serious progress in the war on poverty in the years to come, it will have to be as a result of both parties working together to prioritize economic opportunity and upward mobility.

Mr. Speaker, I will say that there are Republican leaders, and I applaud them for it, who are talking about and focusing on those in poverty, those who have little in our country. I applaud them for talking, but talk is not enough. We must invest in making sure that they can avail themselves of the promise of America, not by telling the most vulnerable Americans that they will have to fend for themselves, that their fellow citizens will not lend a helping hand during their time of need.

I'm glad, Mr. Speaker, that President Obama has chosen to make reducing economic inequality a focus in 2014. This, Mr. Speaker, ought to be our sacred charge: to carry on the work that President Johnson and others began, without pause, until hunger, homelessness, and economic insecurity, in any form, no longer endanger the promise of our Nation.

I thank the gentlelady for her leadership and for yielding.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much for that very powerful message, Mr. HOYER.

Let me now yield to Representative DANNY DAVIS from Illinois who continues to remind us of the formerly incarcerated individuals who have families and children living below the poverty line.

Mr. DANNY K. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank the outstanding gentlewoman from California for yielding.

I am pleased to join with my colleagues to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the war on poverty declared by

President Lyndon Johnson, a historic moment in our Nation's history when he affirmed a national priority to support those in need.

One of the reasons that I got involved and ran for public office was because of the war on poverty and the programs it created. The war on poverty called for citizen involvement and participation to strengthen America. As I got more involved and more engaged, the more aware I became of the difficulties faced by individuals, families, and communities. Ultimately, I decided I would run for public office.

The war on poverty has improved the lives of millions of low-income Americans through the creation of critical safety net programs such as the ESE Act assistance, Medicare, Medicaid, increased Social Security benefits, Head Start, legal assistance, investment in K-12 education, Federal college aid and loans, a permanent food stamp program, expanded housing assistance for low-income people, community health centers, mental health programs, and we could go on and on to talk about the programs.

But the real reality is that we still have not fulfilled the dream of seriously reducing and eradicating poverty. So we must not only remember, we must not only talk, but we must act. And one of the best ways to start is to provide right now—right now—resources for individuals who are unemployed.

I thank the gentlewoman.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

Let me now yield to the gentlelady from California, Congresswoman SUSAN DAVIS, whom I served with in the California Legislature, who continues to remind us that middle-income individuals are worried at this point now of falling into the ranks of the poor. Thank you for being here.

Mrs. DAVIS of California. Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to thank my colleague, Congresswoman LEE, for this opportunity and for, really, the privilege of working with her for so many years.

Today, the 50th anniversary of the war on poverty, reminds us all that more work must be done. And if I could relate on a personal level, I don't believe that I would have had an opportunity to continue my education without having been about to further that at the time of the war on poverty. As someone who wanted to go into social work, it certainly was an opportunity for me to do that and to make a difference in that area.

One of the most important steps that we can take is to make pre-K available to all American children. Today, only 69 percent of American 4-year-olds are enrolled in early childhood education programs—only 69 percent. You might be surprised to learn that that troubling statistic places us near the bottom—near the bottom—in terms of access among our advanced country OECD peers, in the bottom. In our global economy, that means many

American children start behind least when they can afford to. They just cannot make it beyond that.

The stakes to address this issue today have never been higher. Over the last decade, we have learned that early childhood education makes a big difference. We have learned that the achievement gap begins before our kids even reach kindergarten, and we have learned that quality pre-K leads to better life outcomes in school, in careers, and in personal health. The research, indeed, shows that children who attend preschool are more likely to graduate high school, earn higher pay, and live more productive lives.

Sadly, we are just not putting these lessons of the war on poverty when we began to address these issues, we are not putting these lessons into action. The argument for universal pre-K is not just a lofty moral imperative. That sounds good. No. It is good science and it is good economics. By some estimates, the return on investment is nearly seven to one. And that is why most economists agree that pre-K is a great investment; it is not just another expense.

I know that parents throughout San Diego and across our country just want to give their kids the very best start in life, and we should be working together to make that happen, to make sure all our kids get a real chance to succeed. And that, Mr. Speaker, would be one gigantic step to elevate our children out of poverty.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much for your leadership and for being here with us tonight, Congresswoman DAVIS.

I would now like to yield to the gentleman from New York (Mr. RANGEL), someone who has been a fighter and a warrior for many, many years and who continues to remind us of our moral obligation, our religious obligation for many, to ensure that we continue this fight in the war on poverty.

Mr. RANGEL. Let me first thank the gentlelady from California for carrying this torch during a time that there seems to be such a lack of sensitivity to the poor. As with Lyndon Johnson, there was a concentration of those people who vote—that is, the middle class—and somehow even now, 50 years later, we have a lot of concerns, and rightly so, about the middle class, but somehow the poor have just been written off. And the gentlelady from California and our minority leader together have reminded us that we have a basic obligation here that if you want to take care of the country and our spiritual needs, the poor cannot be excluded.

So in listening more recently to the words that President Johnson spoke in the joint session in 1964, it was really an act of courage to talk about something that too many people seemed to be embarrassed about, and the fact is that we had a national obligation to take care of the lesser of our brothers and sisters.

Today we can take for granted Medicaid, Medicare, expansion of Social Security, incentives for our children, and earned income tax credits. All of it was done not as Blacks and Whites or northerners and southerners or Democrats and Republicans, but with a spirit that that was a part of the reason that we were sent to Congress, to make this a stronger Nation.

□ 1645

And it is interesting how moved so many people in the world were to hear the breath of fresh air coming from Rome and from the Pope, not a message to Catholics but a message to the world in pointing out that we have a responsibility to God, to thank Him or Her for what has been given to us; but, more importantly, to follow those Biblical guidelines that say that we have an obligation to think in terms of the lesser of our brothers and sisters. And so whether we are seeking warmer clothes or assistance during times of ill health, it seems to me that we have this political and we have this spiritual need.

Finally, I would like to say to the gentlelady and those listening, I think from a patriot's point of view and from an economist's point of view and from a nationalist's point of view and from a national security point of view, this Nation cannot survive with expansion of the poor, the poverty of the middle class, and the wealthy just accumulating wealth by standing by doing nothing.

What made this country great are not the rich and the poor, but those people who can hope to achieve for their children through education and hard work, to achieve anything that is possible for humankind to do, and this is what built that Nation. And today, it is frightening as we see the disparity between the very poor and the very wealthy, to see that even talks about it would have Presidents and Members of Congress to be called socialists and, indeed, even the Pope. But the fact remains that unless we have people who have the ability to purchase, unless we have small businesses that are responsible for most all of the jobs in this country, unless we have people manufacturing and providing goods and services, then we don't have an economy.

And so no matter which way you look at it, from a political or economic point of view, if our Nation is not going to succeed in terms of economic security, it can no longer be concerned with its national security and the leadership position that we hold in the world.

So let me thank the gentlelady for constantly reminding us that this isn't a one-day job that we have to do. This isn't a Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Democrat, Republican issue. This is something that the world is watching what we do with our own, and hoping that once we get our act together, perhaps we can do more for the world.

Ms. LEE of California. I want to thank the gentleman for reminding us

tonight of our moral obligation to the most vulnerable in our country. Thank you for being here.

How much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 27 minutes remaining.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlelady from Illinois (Ms. DUCKWORTH), who will speak on behalf of not only her constituents but the entire country. She has come to Congress, hit the ground running, and continues to remind us of our veterans and the sacrifices that they have made, and to ensure their economic security. So many live on food stamps, unfortunately, as we speak. So thank you for being here.

Ms. DUCKWORTH. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Speaker, Lynn Richards of Elgin, Illinois, a town in Illinois that is well known for manufacturing everything from Elgin watches all of the way through to the Elgin street sweeper, still in use today, Lynn Richards of Elgin, Illinois, needs her unemployment insurance extended. In April, she lost her manufacturing job of 3 years. She and her husband kept their family afloat with the help of unemployment insurance. And now, 10 months later, she is pregnant with her second child. She said recently:

I have been working since I was 20 years old. I have never had this much trouble getting a job in my life. I have applied to 200 places, and I have gotten less than 10 calls and just a couple of interviews. No employer wants to hire someone who is pregnant.

Lynn is just one of 80,000 Illinoisans who have lost their unemployment insurance. I understand what these families are facing. When I was a teenager, my father, a combat veteran, was in his mid-fifties and had worked since he had enlisted in the Marine Corps at 16. He lost his job. My dad did everything he could to find work, but was turned down again and again. My mother took in sewing, and I took a minimum-wage job to help make ends meet. Eventually my dad got a job, but Federal assistance programs were there to help keep my family afloat. Many Americans want to find work, but simply cannot. Punishing these families by taking away unemployment benefits is a terrible mistake.

The absence of unemployment insurance is jeopardizing the economic progress that we are making. By removing the benefits to 80,000 Illinois families, we are taking more than \$25 million out of our economy every week. Let's put partisanship aside and extend unemployment insurance now for our families and our businesses.

I thank the gentlelady from California again for her leadership on this issue.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentlewoman from Connecticut (Ms. DELAURO) whose subcommittee I serve on, the Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health, and Human Services.

Ms. DELAURO. I thank the gentlelady for her leadership and her indefatigable pursuit of this cause and the focus of not just this caucus but the country on the issue of poverty and of the poor.

Fifty years ago today, President Lyndon Johnson stood right behind where I stand now and urged the Congress to join him in working to end poverty in the United States. He said to this body:

We have in 1964 a unique opportunity and obligation—to prove the success of our system; to disprove those cynics at home and abroad who question our purpose and our competence.

If we fail, if we fritter and fumble away our opportunity in needless, senseless quarrels between Democrats and Republicans, or between the House and Senate, or between Congress and the administration, then history will judge us harshly. But if we succeed, if we can achieve these goals by forging in this country a greater sense of union, then and only then can we take full satisfaction in the State of the Union.

That opportunity and obligation to prove we can work together, and to do everything we can to end poverty in America, remains with us in 2014. And right now, we are failing that solemn obligation to the American people.

For decades, slowly but surely our efforts in fighting poverty have been making a difference. If you include the social safety net that President Johnson and later generations helped to construct, the poverty rate fell from 26 percent in 1967 to 16 percent in 2012.

This was achieved because, in the past, we have always worked to ensure that a rising tide lifts all boats, that the gains of prosperity are felt broadly, and that in tough times, Americans who fall behind have a chance to get back on their feet.

But recently, we have seen this House majority choose to break this long-standing compact, to turn their backs on the most vulnerable Americans. Consider what they are trying to do to food stamps, our most important anti-hunger program. Food stamps help to feed over 47 million Americans, nearly half of whom are children. For decades, Republicans and Democrats have worked together to pass a farm bill that does right by struggling Americans, even while working to support our farmers.

But even though 99 percent of food stamp recipients live below the poverty line, this majority severed food stamps from the farm bill. They tried to cut food stamps by \$40 billion, meaning 4 million Americans would be denied food.

Even the final conference bill will reportedly cut roughly \$8.5 billion from the program and deny critical food aid to over 800,000 households. Cutting this aid means kids can no longer concentrate in school because they are quite literally starving. It means seniors getting sick and going to the hospital because they can no longer afford proper nourishment.

To take another example, look at what is happening with unemployment

insurance. In the past, as far back as the Eisenhower administration, Congress has worked to extend unemployment benefits when the jobless rate was in the 5-7 percent range.

But last month, even though unemployment remains above 7 percent, this House majority refused to work to extend these important benefits. The benefits have expired. What that means is that 1.3 million American men and women have already lost their unemployment insurance, including 26,000 in my State of Connecticut.

Many are people who had jobs. They lost them through no fault of their own, and who in this difficult economy, and even despite education, training, and job experience, still cannot find a job. Even as the stock market is at record levels, we are telling these Americans you are on your own. We are pulling up the ladder on them and closing the hatch. It is wrong. It is not what America is about. Slashing these programs will hurt and derail our economic recovery.

Our top priority in this Congress should be to do everything that we can to create jobs, help workers, help families get back on their feet. That is the moral responsibility of good government.

In the words of Pope Francis, we should all be “working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty, to promote the integral development of the poor. This means education, access to health care, and above all employment.” That is the great and the still unfinished cause that Lyndon Johnson dedicated us to 50 years ago.

This Nation is watching. It is time for all of us to step up, work together and do the right thing.

Again, I thank the gentlelady for your focus on this critical issue.

Ms. LEE of California. I thank you so much for not only talking the talk, but walking the walk each and every day.

I yield now to the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. DELANEY) and thank you so much for your tremendous leadership.

Mr. DELANEY. I thank the gentlelady for yielding me this time this afternoon and for her leadership on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, as we all know, today marks that historic day, the 50-year anniversary of President Johnson declaring a formal war on poverty. And on such a day, we must take note of the progress we have made and remind ourselves of the work that has to be done. Across 50 years, if you take into account the effects of programs this government has put in place to target those on poverty, we have significantly reduced the rate of poverty. We have in particular reduced the rate of poverty for our seniors. These facts are first evidence of the notion that the government can make a difference against this problem.

But we also know that more has to be done. Fifty million Americans live in poverty, including about a quarter of

which are our children, our most vulnerable citizens, children who have their whole lives in front of them and are struggling in poverty. We must make a difference against this, and to do that we must do three things.

First, we need to continue to fund the programs that are proven to make a difference in the lives of those living in poverty like food stamps, like funding Head Start.

Second, we need to raise the minimum wage in this country. Right now in 2014, in the wealthiest country in the world, in many States if you work 40 hours a week and earn the minimum wage, you live below the poverty line. That just doesn't pass the look-yourself-in-the-mirror test. The minimum wage for decades has significantly trailed the growth in our economy. We need to raise the minimum wage. That will make a meaningful and impactful difference in the lives of those struggling in poverty.

And, finally, we need to create jobs. Jobs are the most direct way to lift people out of poverty; and through a job, people have personal dignity. To make a difference in the jobs crisis in this country, we need to invest in education across the long term. That will make a disproportionate difference in terms of the number of people living in poverty. But in the short term, we need to do things to get people to work now, like investing in our infrastructure. This is very important work for us to do, Mr. Speaker.

I will close by reflecting on some of the words of President Johnson. He said this fight would not be short and easy, and he was right. We have been at this for 50 years.

He also said no single weapon would suffice, and he was right about that as well. We need to be raising the minimum wage. We need to be investing in jobs. We need to be funding critical programs like food stamps and Head Start.

And then he said that we must not rest until this war is done. And to honor the tens of millions of people who have lived unfortunately in poverty over the last 50 years and the tremendous number of people who have fought this battle, and to live up to the standard of our maker, we must recommit ourselves to this battle.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much.

Let me now yield to the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE), my good friend who constantly throughout his life has been waging this war on poverty. Thank you for being with us.

□ 1700

Mr. KILDEE. I thank the gentlelady from California (Ms. LEE) for her leadership and her stewardship of this important obligation that we are here to commemorate.

Mr. Speaker, it was 50 years ago today that President Johnson stood at that podium right in front of us. I can still conjure the images of that speech.

Of course, these are images of black and white recordings of President Johnson standing there. It reminds me of the special obligation that we are called to and that he articulated so well half a century ago. I was 5 years old when he gave that speech. But like many I know here, I was sort of a precocious kid, and I was really, really interested in our government and in politics, and I followed it from a very young age—even that tender age of 5.

I remember as a kid in the 1960s and early 1970s going through school thinking that the great struggles—the civil rights struggle, the women's rights movement, this war on poverty—were the big fights of our generation. In some ways, I almost felt at that point in time a moment had passed me by never imagining that when the time came so many years later and I would have an opportunity to serve in Congress that we are actually still fighting those same fights, that we are still engaged in that same struggle.

Fifty years later, after President Johnson's speech, in the wealthiest society ever imagined, we are still fighting this war on poverty. In fact, we are seeing recently growing disparity, growing inequality in our society. We have not eradicated poverty. In fact, we haven't yet gotten to the point where we can say we are close.

We do continue that battle. The battle over unemployment insurance, for example, is a part of that same fight. Some in this body would choose to continue their crusade to cut that important program. We have to remind ourselves that just since 2008, 11 million Americans have been saved from poverty because they were able to have that unemployment insurance available to keep them whole until they could find new meaningful, rewarding work.

So instead of cutting these important programs—Head Start, our nutrition programs, the programs that actually change the trajectory of the lives of those who are struggling to find their way in our society—we ought to be doubling those investments, we ought to be making sure that no American ever has to wonder if they will fall below that common floor of decency that we all would agree should be part of any civilized society.

We should have a minimum wage in this country that guarantees that people who work full time don't live in poverty. Fifty years later, we have got a lot of work to do.

I heard the other day—I will close by saying this—I heard the other day a Member of the other body make a comment that perhaps we ought to simply acknowledge that in this Nation we have lost the war on poverty, when 50 years ago a quarter of our society was living in poverty and today that number is 16 percent. While we know we have a long way to go, we know that these programs actually do work. We have to ask ourselves what kind of country, what kind of society do we

want to be? I think if we answer the question right we will live up to the challenge that President Johnson laid down 50 years ago.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, how much time do we have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman from California has 17 minutes remaining.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

We have many Members who still would like to speak, which really let's us know the importance of this issue.

I yield to Congresswoman GRACE MENG from New York, a freshman from New York who has hit the ground running, is representing her constituents in a bold and brilliant way. Thank you for being with us.

Ms. MENG. Thank you. I again also want to thank the gentlelady from California for her tremendous efforts in speaking up and advocating for so many people who are voiceless.

Mr. Speaker, I come before you today to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the war on poverty. Our Nation has had many successes over the last 50 years. Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, and Pell Grants are incredible programs that help our entire country. However, even with these successful programs which deserve our recognition, this is not a time for celebration.

After five decades, many would think that our congressional leaders were still committed to fighting poverty and reducing the gap between the haves and have-nots. I would still think that we are committed to helping hardworking Americans who have fallen on rough times through no fault of their own.

The war on poverty is far from over. Instead of pressing the issue, we are retreating from it. 1.3 million Americans just lost their unemployment insurance and are suffering from long-term joblessness. If we don't renew the program, 383,000 New Yorkers will lose access to benefits over the next 12 months. We would also be responsible for preventing an increase of GDP by 0.2 percent and the blocking of 200,000 jobs.

For me, and I know for many in this Chamber, inflicting avoidable pain on this country is unacceptable. With no political gimmicks, we must vote to renew unemployment insurance now.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you very much.

Let me yield now to Congressman PETE DEFazio from Oregon, who has some stories he would like to tell about his constituents and what they are going through.

Mr. DEFazio. I thank the gentlelady.

Mr. Speaker, on the 50th anniversary, the Republicans just got it a little bit wrong. The war on poverty, they thought it was the war for poverty as they are dismantling one by one the most important programs that help lift and keep people out of poverty, like extended unemployment insurance.

Let me read a few subjects here.

Roseburg, Oregon. A 61-year-old woman working since she was 14:

I don't know if it is my age, but I am having great difficulty finding a job.

A 62-year-old woman from Coos Bay, Oregon, went back to her former employer and said: "Are you hiring?" He said: "You can't be serious. Not at this time of year. Come back in the spring." Unfortunately, she can't make it until spring.

A Eugene veteran. A two-income family, but she lost her job:

Since I haven't been able to find a job, we are close to losing our house and declaring bankruptcy. I am actively seeking employment every day.

Then we go to Springfield, Oregon, my hometown. We have a woman whose son is in the Army. She says:

I can't find a job. I have been looking. I have to give notice to my landlord and become homeless.

Then Corvallis, Oregon. A 54-year-old man. He had been working his whole life since 17. In his last job, he was there for 13 years, but he can't find a job and he is going to be forced into homelessness.

Then, finally, another gentleman from Springfield, Oregon:

\$330 a week I received wasn't much, but it helped keep me from having to go to food banks and asking for help. We went just before Christmas. The food bank had run out of food. I have to decide now whether to buy medicine or food or heat my house.

That is the legacy of the cruel cuts of these Republicans. These are people, hardworking Americans who lost their jobs through no fault of their own and they want to work. If they fall into poverty, they lose their home, they lose their cell service, their telephone, their car. How are they ever going to get a job? We need to help them now before they fall even more off the cliff. Extend unemployment benefits today as a celebration that we, as the American people, do not tolerate poverty in this country.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you for that very powerful statement and for sharing those stories. All of us have stories very similar, but thank you for your constituents' testimonies.

I yield to Congresswoman MARCY KAPTUR from Ohio. I am privileged to serve with Congresswoman KAPTUR on the Appropriations Committee, who constantly speaks for the voiceless. Thank you for being here.

Ms. KAPTUR. Congresswoman LEE of Oakland, thank you so much for raising the consciousness of a Nation again.

I rise to join my colleagues tonight in support of raising consciousness about how important the programs have been over the years to reduce poverty in our country since the half-century-old effort of the war on poverty started by Lyndon Johnson, a Democrat, who wanted to replace despair with opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I would like to place into the RECORD an execu-

tive summary of the Council of Economic Advisors, dated January 2014, that summarizes the great progress that has been made: poverty in our country declining by more than a third since 1967 because of important programs that Democrats created—Social Security, Medicare, the earned income tax credit, and unemployment compensation, which is being tested as we speak here today. The speaker from Ohio, where unemployment has just gone up, should bring up that bill to extend unemployment benefits that impacts millions of Americans across our country.

People who understand the value of work, they don't want any subsidy, they want a job—they want a job. The most important work we can do is to create jobs, but when they can't get a job, then to give them their earned benefits.

What is great about this evening is I was thinking back to the 1960s—I was pretty young back then—but there was a book written by Michael Harrington, "The Other America." For whatever reason—maybe it was because President Kennedy was President—that book became almost like a small Bible. People read it and it raised their consciousness. I can remember President Kennedy campaigning in the mines in West Virginia and raising consciousness again about the conditions of miners and what they were enduring.

It is very important that we have that same kind of effort across our country to raise consciousness about how important these programs are for our children, for our seniors, for those who are out of work. By working together we, as a people, really do make a difference.

Congresswoman LEE, I want to thank you tonight for being part of that clarion call to raise consciousness of people who really care. The majority of Americans really do. As they are listening to Wall Street announce bigger and bigger and bigger bonuses, they know that there is a war on the middle class right now. So many Americans are falling out of that middle class. They know something is wrong. They want us to champion jobs here in Washington, D.C., and they want to make sure that that safety net is there for them if they hit the skids.

I just thank you so very much for doing this. I thank all of my colleagues who took the time tonight to be here and to issue a clarion call for consciousness for jobs in this country, for extending unemployment benefits, for maintaining Social Security, for maintaining the earned income tax credit, and making sure that our vigilant efforts continue to eliminate poverty in this country.

[From The Council of Economic Advisers, Jan. 2014]

THE WAR ON POVERTY 50 YEARS LATER: A PROGRESS REPORT
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

"Unfortunately, many Americans live on the outskirts of hope—some because of their

poverty, and some because of their color, and all too many because of both. Our task is to help replace their despair with opportunity. This administration today, here and now, declares unconditional war on poverty in America. I urge this Congress and all Americans to join with me in that effort.”

—President Lyndon B. Johnson,

January 8, 1964

Fifty years ago, in January of 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson declared a “War on Poverty” and introduced initiatives designed to improve the education, health, skills, jobs, and access to economic resources of those struggling to make ends meet. While there is more work to do, in the ensuing decades we have strengthened and reformed many of these programs and had significant success in reducing poverty. In this report, the Council of Economic Advisers presents evidence of the progress made possible by decades of bipartisan efforts to fight poverty by expanding economic opportunity and rewarding hard work. We also document some of the key steps the Obama Administration has taken to further increase opportunity and economic security by improving key programs while ensuring greater efficiency and integrity. These steps prevented millions of hardworking Americans from slipping into poverty during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Poverty has declined by more than one-third since 1967.

The percent of the population in poverty when measured to include tax credits and other benefits has declined from 25.8 percent in 1967 to 16.0 percent in 2012.

These figures use new historical estimates of the Census Bureau’s Supplemental Poverty Measure (SPM) anchored to today’s poverty thresholds. The SPM is widely acknowledged to measure poverty more accurately than the official poverty measure, which excludes the value of refundable tax credits and benefits like nutrition assistance and has other limitations.

By anchoring the measure to today’s poverty standards we are able to ask how many people in each year since 1967 would have had inflation-adjusted family resources below the 2012 SPM poverty thresholds.

Despite real progress in the War on Poverty, there is more work to do.

In 2012, there were 49.7 million Americans grappling with the economic and social hardships of living below the poverty line, including 13.4 million children.

While the United States is often seen as the land of economic opportunity, only about half of low-income Americans make it out of the lowest income distribution quintile over a 20-year period. About 40 percent of the differences in parents’ income are reflected in children’s income as they become adults, pointing to strong lingering effects from growing up in poverty.

This significant decline in poverty is largely due to programs that have historically enjoyed bipartisan support and increase economic security and opportunity.

A measure of “market poverty,” that reflects what the poverty rate would be without any tax credits or other benefits, rose from 27.0 percent to 28.7 percent between 1967 and 2012. Countervailing forces of increasing levels of education on the one hand, and inequality, wage stagnation, and a declining minimum wage on the other resulted in “market poverty” increasing slightly over this period. However, poverty measured taking antipoverty and social insurance programs into account fell by more than a third, highlighting the essential role that these programs have played in fighting poverty.

Programs designed to increase economic security and opportunity lifted over 45 million people from poverty in 2012, and led to

an average of 27 million people lifted out of poverty per year for 45 years between 1968 and 2012. Cumulatively these efforts prevented 1.2 billion “person years” of poverty over this period.

Social Security has played a crucial role in lowering poverty among the elderly. Poverty among those aged 65 and older was 35 percent in 1960. Following rapid expansions in Social Security in the 1960s and 1970s, poverty among the elderly fell to 14.8 percent in 2012.

These programs are especially important in mitigating poverty during recessions. Despite an increase in “market poverty” of 4.5 percentage points between 2007 and 2010, the poverty rate, appropriately measured, rose only 0.5 percentage points due to both existing programs and immediate actions taken by President Obama when he took office in response to the worst financial crisis since the Great Depression.

“Deep poverty”—defined as the fraction of individuals living below 50 percent of the poverty line has declined as a result of these programs. Without government tax credits or other benefits, 19.2 percent of the U.S. population would have been in deep poverty in 2012, but only 5.3 percent were in deep poverty when these benefits are included.

Programs that strengthen economic security and increase opportunity continue to be essential in keeping millions of Americans out of poverty and helping them work their way into the middle class.

Social Security benefits reduced the 2012 poverty rate by 8.5 percentage points among all individuals, and by 39.9 percentage points among those aged 65 or older.

Tax credits such as the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) and Child Tax Credit (CTC) reduced the 2012 poverty rate by 3.0 percentage points among all individuals, and by 6.7 percentage points among children.

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)—formerly known as the Food Stamp Program—reduced poverty in 2012 by 1.6 percentage points among all individuals, and by 3.0 percentage points among children.

Unemployment Insurance (UI) reduced poverty by 0.8 percentage points in 2012.

Antipoverty programs have been increasingly oriented around rewarding and encouraging work and are an important source of opportunity for low-income working families.

Both the EITC and the partially refundable component of the CTC increase the reward to work, offsetting payroll taxes and providing a supplement to labor market earnings. Research has shown this increases work and earnings, and increases participation in the workforce, particularly for single parents.

Some traditional antipoverty programs have been redesigned to encourage and promote work. The vast majority of Americans receiving nutrition assistance have a job or are either too young to work, are over age 65 or are disabled. Meanwhile, bipartisan welfare reform signed by President Clinton in 1996 strengthened work requirements and put a greater emphasis on employment.

Despite concerns that antipoverty programs may discourage employment, the best research suggests that work disincentive effects are small or nonexistent for most programs.

Programs that help fight poverty and provide economic security touch a wide swath of Americans at some point in their lives.

Programs that fight poverty help a broad range of Americans get back on their feet after economic misfortune. For example, about half of taxpayers with children used the EITC at some point between 1979 and 2006, and over two-thirds of Americans aged 14 to 22 in 1979 received income from SNAP, AFDC/TANF, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or UI at some point between 1978 and 2010.

Social Security Old Age and Survivors’ Insurance, Social Security Disability Insurance, and UI are available to all Americans with a steady work history. These social insurance programs play an important role in keeping out of poverty those who retire, experience a work-limiting disability, lose a parent or spouse, or lose a job through no fault of their own.

The economic and social benefits from these programs go beyond just helping reduce poverty in the current generation.

Increased access to SNAP for children has been found to lead to better health and greater economic self-sufficiency in adulthood.

Increased family income in childhood from the EITC and CTC leads to higher student achievement.

The long-term effects of Head Start and other high-quality preschool programs include higher educational attainment, employment, and earnings, and lower rates of teen pregnancy and crime, as beneficiary children become teenagers and young adults.

President Obama’s policies to restore economic security and increase opportunity have helped reduce poverty.

The Affordable Care Act ensures all Americans have access to quality, affordable health insurance, by providing the resources and flexibility states need to expand their Medicaid programs to all people who are in or near poverty as well as financial help so hardworking families can find a health plan that fits their needs and their budgets.

The President significantly expanded the refundability of the Child Tax Credit, making it available to millions of working parents who were previously ineligible. He also expanded the EITC for larger families, who face disproportionately high poverty rates, and for low-income married couples. Together these expansions benefit approximately 15 million families by an average of \$800 per year. The President is proposing to make these tax credit improvements permanent and also to raise the minimum wage.

The Administration has advanced investments in early learning and development programs and reforms for coordinated State early learning systems. President Obama has proposed the expansion of voluntary home visiting programs for pregnant women and families with young children; Early Head Start-Child Care Partnerships to improve the quality of care for infants and toddlers; and high-quality preschool for every child.

President Obama has advanced reforms of the nation’s K-12 education system to support higher standards that will prepare students to succeed in college and the workplace; pushed efforts to recruit, prepare, develop, and advance effective teachers and principals; and encouraged a national effort to turn around our lowest-achieving schools. The Administration has also put forward proposals to redesign the Nation’s high schools to better engage students and to connect 99 percent of students to high-speed broadband and digital learning tools within the next five years.

President Obama has proposed Promise Zones where businesses partner with local communities hit hard by the recession to put people back to work and communities can develop and implement their own sustainable plans for a continuum of family and community services and comprehensive education reforms.

President Obama has proposed increased employment and training opportunities for adults who are low-income or long-term unemployed, and summer and year-round opportunities for youth along with reforms to

our unemployment system to make it more of a re-employment system, and community college initiatives to reform our higher education system and support training partnerships with business in high-demand industries.

Other achievements include making college more affordable by reforming student loan programs, raising the maximum Pell Grant, and establishing the American Opportunity Tax Credit which is the first partially refundable tax credit for college; placing 372,000 low-income youth into summer and year-round employment in 2009 and 2010; improving access to school meal programs that help children learn and thrive; and extending minimum wage and overtime protections to nearly all home care workers to help make their jobs more financially rewarding.

The fundamental lesson of the past 50 years is that we have made progress in the War on Poverty largely through bipartisan efforts to strengthen economic security and increase opportunity. As our economy moves forward, rather than cut these programs and risk leaving hardworking Americans behind, we need to build on the progress we have made to strengthen and reform them. Going forward, we can't lose sight of the positive part government can continue to play in reducing economic hardship and ensuring access to economic opportunity for all citizens. At the same time, sustainable improvements are only possible if we create jobs and speed the economic recovery in the short run, raise economic growth in the long run, and work to ensure that the benefits of a growing economy reach all Americans.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you for that very powerful statement, Congresswoman KAPTUR.

I yield now to our assistant leader, my good friend Congressman CLYBURN from the great State of South Carolina, who constantly and consistently talks about prioritizing and targeting resources to area needs, to the poor and low-income communities. Thank you for being here.

Mr. CLYBURN. I thank the gentlelady for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, when President Johnson stood in this Chamber 50 years ago and declared war on poverty, the richest country in the world had a poverty rate of 19 percent. President Johnson cautioned us on that evening that the war on poverty would be a long one and not an easy one. Yet, 9 years later, in 1973, the poverty rate in this country had dropped to 11 percent. We were most definitely winning the war on poverty.

Unfortunately, after its initial success, many politicians found success running down the achievements the war on poverty had on many Americans. Politicians scapegoating so-called "welfare queens" furthered a narrative that the war on poverty was not worth fighting. Yet, I can show you firsthand examples in my home State of South Carolina where the war on poverty did, in fact, succeed.

For example, Medicare and Medicaid, both war on poverty initiatives, have made a tremendous difference in the health security of older Americans and those of modest means. In fact, at the time of the institution of Medicare, the poverty rate among seniors was over 30 percent. Today, the poverty rate

among seniors has dropped to beneath 10 percent.

□ 1715

It is important to remember that, a year after President Johnson made that speech, we passed the Voting Rights Act of 1965. That, to me, was to empower poor people, to empower people of color to go to the polls, to get registered and to vote to make their own statements as to how to fight the war on poverty.

Today, we in the Congressional Black Caucus have been calling for our government to do across the board what we did in our so-called "stimulus bill," and that is to institute a 10-20-30 initiative to direct funds to targeted areas so that 10 percent of all of this money can go into those communities where 20 percent or more of the population have been locked beneath the poverty level for the last 30 years. If we were to begin to target these persistent poverty counties, we would, in fact, eliminate poverty, and we would see all of our people who are living in poverty get beneath the 10 percent that we think will be tolerable over the next 10 years.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you so much for being here with us and for your leadership, Mr. CLYBURN.

Mr. Speaker, how much time do I have remaining?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The gentlewoman has 1 minute remaining.

Ms. LEE of California. Let me yield now to the gentlelady from Texas, Congresswoman SHEILA JACKSON LEE.

Ms. JACKSON LEE. I want to thank the gentlelady from California for her leadership.

Mr. Speaker, simply, we can begin to attack poverty in 2014 by extending the unemployment benefits for 1.3 million Americans.

Thank you, President Johnson, as we honor the fight against the poverty that has encompassed so many Americans. The war on poverty is a war to be won. We thank you for VISTA, the Child Nutrition, the National School Lunch, the Food Stamp program, the Community Action Programs, the Indian Reservation Programs, and Legal Services.

I served on the board of the Gulfcoast Legal Services, and we say to our colleagues: if you would look at the red that is on these sheets, you will know that poverty does not belong to any one Member. It belongs to all Members. All States have individuals who are living below the poverty line. It is time to continue the fight against poverty through unemployment insurance, through job training, through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, through child care, and Head Start—a vital, vital, vital transition of opportunity for poor children. It is time to continue that fight.

It is our pledge and our commitment, along with legislation that I intend to introduce, to give enhanced training to those who are chronically unemployed,

to keep the dream of President Johnson's alive and to extinguish poverty as we know it in the United States of America.

President Lyndon Johnson:

"... we have the power to strike away the barriers to full participation in our society. Having the power, we have the duty."

It has been 50 years since President Lyndon Johnson declared war on poverty, an initiative to endure the ideals and principles of President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, with hopes to rid our nation of the plague and disparity of poverty.

Social programs established by the War on Poverty provide invaluable aid to the elderly, the seriously disabled, members of working households, and children and spouses of deceased workers.

NATIONAL SUCCESSES OF THE WAR ON POVERTY

Major initiatives include: The Social Security Act 1965; Food Stamp Act of 1964; The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964; Job Corps; Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA).

Programs established during the era of President Johnson and those created since as result of his initiative have cut poverty nearly in half.

In 2012, programs kept 45 million people, to include 9 million children, out of poverty according to the Census Bureau's Supplemental Policy Measure (SPM).

If benefits were taken away, the poverty rate in America would be 29 percent under the SPM, but with them, the rate is 16 percent.

Cumulatively, programs developed during the War on Poverty have prevented 1.2 billion "person years" of poverty.

One of the demographics most affected by poverty was the elderly. In 1960, 35 percent of those ages 65 and older lived in poverty. With the implementation of Social Security, poverty among the elderly fell to 14.8 percent in 2012.

PROGRAMS ENCOURAGE WORK AND CREATE REWARDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

The Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit have not only reduced the poverty rate by 3.0 percentage points among all individuals and 6.7 percentage points among children, they reward work by offsetting payroll taxes and providing a supplement to labor market earnings.

Research shows these tax credits increases work and earnings, and increases participation in the workforce, especially for single parents.

DESPITE TREMENDOUS SUCCESS, WE HAVE TO KEEP MOVING

Though substantial progress has been made in the War on Poverty, in 2012 nearly 50 million Americans, including 13.4 million children, remained below the poverty line.

As result of these impoverished conditions, our American youth is subject to substandard housing, homelessness, inadequate food and nutrition, poor childcare, lack of access to health care, and dangerous neighborhoods.

Poorer teenagers and young children are at a significant risk for poor academic achievement, dropping out of school, behavioral problems and delays in development.

The American Opportunity Tax Credit makes college more affordable by being the first partially refundable tax credit for college, placing 372,000 low-income youth into summer and year-round employment in 2009 and 2010.

POVERTY STATISTICS IN TEXAS AND THE 18TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Eighteen percent of households in the state of Texas from 2009 through 2011 ranked second in the highest rate of food insecurity only the state of Mississippi exceed the ratio of households struggling with hunger.

In the 18th Congressional District and estimated 151,741 families lived in poverty.

INITIATIVES TAKEN TO PREVENT POVERTY IN TEXAS AND THE 18TH CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

H.R. 3773, Unemployed Jobhunters Protection and Assistance Act of 2013 will reinstate vital benefits for 64,294 Texans and maintain benefits for 4,112 Texans per week slated to lose them.

Unemployment insurance payments provide partial income replacement to unemployed workers who meet the requirements of State law.

The State of Texas requires that the unemployed insurance payments only go to persons who are unemployed at no fault of their own.

Unemployment payments beyond 26 weeks in the state of Texas are made as a direct result of Federal funds sent to the states to extend unemployment insurance payments.

To continue to receive unemployment benefits in the State of Texas an unemployed person must be actively looking for work and provide evidence of their continued job search by reporting where they: submitted an application; had a job interview; or submitted a resume.

According to the White House Council of Economic Advisers and the Department of Labor, Texas will lose 11,766 jobs if unemployment insurance payments are not reinstated.

IN SUMMARY

Throughout the 50-year history on the War on Poverty, great progress has been made largely due to bipartisan efforts to strengthen economic security and increase opportunity.

At this crucial time in our history, it is important to maintain the vision established by President Johnson, to continue to combat poverty with our maximum effort. Cutting programs now will only undermine 50 years of hard-work to better the lives of millions of Americans.

WAR ON POVERTY LEGISLATION AND PROGRAMS

VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America)—Provided an opportunity for individuals, 18 and over, to join the War on Poverty. Volunteers would work with migrant laborers, on Indian reservations in urban and rural community action programs, in slum areas,

hospitals, schools and in institutions for the mentally ill and retarded.

Child Nutrition Act of 1966—This was an anti-hunger program started by President Johnson as part of his "War on Poverty". It created the special milk and school breakfast programs.

National School Lunch Act of 1968—This act extended the school lunch program to include children who participated in "service institutions".

Food Stamp Act of 1964—Made the Food Stamp Program permanent, strengthened the agricultural economy, and provided improved levels of nutrition among low-income households.

Community Action Programs of 1965 (CAP)—Under these programs the government was to provide both financial and technical assistance for locally designed and operated programs. Funds could be used for trips for slum children, remedial reading, job counseling, day care services etc.

Migrant Assistance—The act authorized \$35 million for loans and grants in 1965 for development of programs to aid migrant workers in housing, sanitation, education, and day care of children.

Indian Reservation Programs—Health, educational and job training programs are typical components of Indian projects. As a component of the Community Action Program, projects for Indians were established on 31 reservations housing 60,000 for America's Indians during the year of 1965.

Legal Services (1965)—This program provided (1) legal representation for the poor, (2) research into the legal problems of poverty, (3) education of the disadvantaged about legal rights and responsibilities, and (4) advocacy of improvements in the law affecting the poor.

Small Business Loans—Title IV authorized the Director to make 15-year repayable loans to establish or strengthen small businesses and help them to employ the long-term unemployed.

Rural Loans—The Office of Economic Opportunity Director was authorized to make 15-year loans of up to \$2,500 to low-income rural families who could not get credit elsewhere.

Economic Opportunity Act of 1964—Created the Jobs Corps and the Community Action Program

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT POVERTY IN AMERICA

The number of Americans living in poverty (less than \$22,314 for a family of four) stands at 46 million people or 15.1 percent of population.

The actual number of poor Americans living in poverty nearly increased 20 percent since the publication of *The Other America* in 1962.

Economic growth didn't trickle down: Since 1980, GDP has doubled while poverty rates have remained essentially flat.

Americans in deep poverty: 20.5 million Americans, or 6.7 percent of the population, have an income less than HALF of the poverty line (less than \$11,157 for a family of four). This rate has doubled since 1976.

Children Under Age 18 in poverty: 16.4 million, 22 percent of all children, including 39

percent of African-American children, 35 percent of Latino children, and 12 percent of white children.

People in Single female-headed families (with children) have a poverty rate of 42 percent.

Roughly one in three Americans live at twice the poverty level or less (less than \$44,628 for a family of four): That's more than 103 million people.

Half the jobs in the country now pay less than \$33,000 a year, and a quarter pay less than the poverty line of \$22,000 for a family of four; but public policies including the Earned Income Tax Credit, the Child Tax Credit, Supplemental Security Income, and Social Security, kept 40 million people from falling into poverty in 2010.

Poverty rate among the elderly was reduced by nearly half between 1967 and 1975, and reached a historic low of 8.9 percent in 2009, due in large part to Social Security.

Ms. LEE of California. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker, I have Congresswoman SCHAKOWSKY and Congressmen GREEN and BISHOP here, who would like to insert their statements into the RECORD. We had an overwhelming number of Members who attended, and they did not have the opportunity to speak tonight.

GENERAL LEAVE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, all Members will have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of this Special Order.

There was no objection.

Ms. LEE of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BISHOP of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, on this day in 1964, President Johnson's called on our nation to launch an 'unconditional war on poverty'. Exactly 50 years later, we can state with confidence two truths.

The programs resulting from Johnson's War on Poverty have improved the lives of Americans of all ages in innumerable ways.

True, the war on poverty has not been won. I submit that now is NOT the time to end our battle.

Today, there are nearly 50 million Americans grappling with the economic and social hardships of living below the poverty line, including 13.4 million children.

In my district in Southwest Georgia alone, more than one in four people and almost one of every two children fall below the poverty line.

And yet without programs such as unemployment insurance, Rural Tax Credits, school lunch programs, affordable housing, Medicare, Medicaid, Job Corps, SNAP, TRIO, and others, where would we be?

In Georgia alone:

Over 29,000 children from low-income families would be without critical early stage developmental resources provided by Head Start and Early Head Start.

Over 1.8 million low-income individuals and families would lose the ability to choose healthy food options through SNAP for themselves and their children.

And so on.

America's War on Poverty has gone beyond just helping reduce our poverty rate. It has educated, fed, housed, and trained millions of Americans, giving them hope and preparing them for a more successful tomorrow.

By many estimates, the reduction in poverty has drastically improved the way of life for many Americans over the past 50 years.

Lastly, and most importantly, we must remember that the label 'poor' means more than a cold numeric value attributed to one's earning potential. We must remember that America's poor have a face. That face exists today!

They are the homeless, freezing in the cold, because their job does not pay enough to cover the rent or because they have no job. They are children who cannot concentrate at school because hunger fills their daytime thoughts. They are uninsured Americans who, before the passage of the Affordable Care Act, could not afford quality health insurance.

They are hard working Americans just striving to make ends meet and, like the majority of us, gripped with the goal of creating a better life for themselves and loved ones.

We cannot turn our back on them now.

We must continue to fight the war on poverty—and we must win!

We must rededicate ourselves to the values that Lyndon Johnson lifted up 50 years ago.

Values that set a moral standard for America and for which we still must strive. Values that were given to us over 2,000 years ago by Jesus in the parable of the Sheep and the Goats found in the 25th Chapter of Matthew.

For when I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in. I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me. And whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.

President Johnson took that to heart 50 years ago. And we today must do the same.

HOMEOWNER FLOOD INSURANCE AFFORDABILITY ACT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. MARINO) is recognized for 60 minutes as the designee of the majority leader.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the subject of my Special Order.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Pennsylvania?

There was no objection.

Mr. MARINO. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to continue to bring attention to an issue that is devastating the people of Pennsylvania—across the 10th District and other districts in Pennsylvania—and across this country. It is the implementation of the Biggert-Waters Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012.

It has unintentionally burdened lower- and middle class homeowners and small businesses. Rates have increased astronomically. Biggert-Waters had the best of intentions. However, FEMA's methodology is severely flawed, and FEMA failed to warn Congress.

This afternoon, I am joined by a bipartisan group of my colleagues from across the country; and while the de-

tails of a proposed solution may vary, I believe we are unified behind the goal of protecting the livelihoods and investments of hardworking Americans.

Our homes are often our most valuable assets in that they allow us to retire; they allow us to send our children to college; they allow us to leave something behind for our children and our grandchildren for a better life. These homes form the backbone of riverside and coastal working-class communities. The downfall of these residential real estate markets will be catastrophic. Homeowners will lose their total investments in their properties. Small businesses will lose their customers, not to mention their real estate. Small banks will go out of business because people are not able to pay the insurance that the mortgages call for. The communities left behind will no longer have an adequate tax base to fund basic services.

I believe the best solution right now is to repeal Biggert-Waters in its entirety and to start again from square one. Authors of the law on the House Financial Services Committee intended to stabilize the National Flood Insurance Program, but this law has disproportionately affected low- and middle class homeowners who cannot afford these premiums.

Although we here in Congress tend to think in abstract terms, I want to share some of the stories I have heard from my neighbors back home in the 10th Congressional District of Pennsylvania.

Jeff and Erica Waldman purchased a house in Muncy, Pennsylvania. Their flood insurance premium was initially \$900 per year. Now they are being told to pay by the end of last year—the 31st, a few days ago—\$9,000 a year for flood insurance—up front. Jeff and Erica are frustrated about the lack of information they were given and are days away from losing their home as we speak. We cannot solely place this burden on people like Jeff and Erica.

Laurie and Michael Portanova purchased three historic properties in Jersey Shore, Pennsylvania, last year, hoping that their new business would rejuvenate the Main Street feel for the borough. Their flood insurance premium per year was \$2,800. They received a notice that they had to pay \$40,000 by the end of the year for flood insurance, by the end of 2013. They are close to walking away from their investments and taking a huge loss. This would also have devastating consequences on other property owners in Jersey Shore, who will have an additional tax burden if homeowners in the area are not able to keep their homes because they are not able to pay the flood insurance.

Mr. Speaker, at this time, I yield to the gentleman from Pennsylvania, Congressman THOMPSON.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gentleman for yielding, and I appreciate my good friend from Pennsylvania for

hosting this Special Order on a very serious issue.

Biggert-Waters, I think, was a piece of legislation that we all had great hopes for in terms of the National Flood Insurance Program. As the commercial insurance industry really exited the insuring of flood risk, it was left to the Federal Government; and with the recent flooding, obviously, over the past number of years, that fund has been decimated. Last year, on a bipartisan basis, Congress passed the Flood Insurance Reform Act of 2012. The measure included some long overdue reforms that strengthened the financial solvency and administrative efficiency of the National Flood Insurance Program.

The rationale for the 2012 law was the need for the National Flood Insurance Program to more accurately reflect flood risk. Historically, most low-risk States have subsidized higher risk States, mostly coastal. Similarly, low-risk areas within the States have tended to subsidize those areas with a higher risk, more prone to flooding. The linchpin of the 2012 law, however, was to use true actuarial rates in order to prevent very low-risk areas from subsidizing moderate to high-risk areas. The unintended consequences have been drastic premium increases for those plans that were traditionally subsidized by the National Flood Insurance Program.

Under the law, Congress mandated that the Federal Emergency Management Agency complete an affordability study to further evaluate any unintended consequences as a result of the changes. The study was to be completed before the rate increase went into effect. I want to repeat that. The law that was passed in 2012 had a safeguard in there that the administration, through the agency FEMA, was to do affordability studies before rates went up. That is not what happened, Mr. Speaker. That would have been critical to understanding the full scope of the new risk model. FEMA has failed to complete the affordability study that was required under the law. Additionally, there remains a huge concern that FEMA does not have the data that it needs to accurately determine risk under this new policy regime and that it is incapable of creating a new mapping system that truly reflects true actuarial rates.

Now, while 80 percent of the policyholders in this country will not see an increase as a result of the new policy, a small portion of the properties in this country—actually, I think it is a significant portion of properties—are being hit with staggering increases. This is a serious concern for communities and individuals across the country, including many from the Fifth District of Pennsylvania.

Just recently, I have heard from counties, communities and homeowners from Cameron County and Erie County—Clinton, McKean, Crawford, Potter, Huntington, and Centre—and